

Appl. No. 10/644,442
Amdt. Dated March 14, 2005
Reply to Office action of September 13, 2004

Amendment to the Drawings:

The attached sheet of drawings includes changes to Figures 3 and 4. This sheet, which includes Figures 2, 3 and 4, replaces the original sheet including Figures 2, 3 and 4. In Figure 3, previously designated element 32 has been changed to 33. In Figure 4, previously designated elements 30 and 32 have been changed to 30' and 32', respectively.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet
Annotated Sheet Showing Changes

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REMARKS

The Applicants have carefully reviewed the Office action dated September 13, 2004 and thank Examiner Binda for his detailed review of the pending claims. This response is timely filed with a petition and fee for a three-month extension of time. The Applicants believe that no additional fee is due. However, if such an additional fee is due, please charge deposit account 07-1360 from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

In response to the Office action, the Applicants have amended the claims, specification and drawings to correct informalities and distinguish the present invention from the cited references. In the course of amending the application no new matter has been introduced. Specifically, claims 1, 12 and 18 were amended and claims 2, 10 and 13 are canceled. Accordingly, claims 1, 3-9, 11-12, and 14-20 remain pending in the present application. The Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the pending claims in view of the amendments and following remarks.

Amendments to the Drawings

The Office action objected to the drawings because reference numerals 30 and 32 were each used to identify a part and then reused to identify a modification of such part. The Applicant has amended Figures 3 and 4 to change element number 32 to 32' and 33, respectively. Also, Figure 3 was amended to change element number 30 to 30'. Further, the specification has been amended, as described below, to change the element numbers as well. Accordingly, the Applicants request that the objection to the drawings be removed.

Amendments to the Specification

The Specification was objected to because of informalities and for failing to provide proper antecedent basis for claimed subject matter. To correct the informalities and provide proper antecedent basis paragraphs 21, 25, 27 and 30 have been amended. The Applicants request that the objection to the disclosure be removed. Further, amendments were also made to paragraphs 27 and 30 to account for the change in element numbers described above in the Amendments to the Drawings.

Claim Objections

The Office action objected to the claims because the elements of the claims were not separated by line indentations. The Applicants have presented a complete listing of claims with the present reply. The independent claims 1, 12 and 18 are presented with the elements

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separated by line indentations. Additionally, amendments to add a colon (:) after the term comprising in each independent claim has also been completed. Accordingly, the Applicants request that the objection to the claims be removed.

Claim Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §112

The Office action rejected claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Specifically, the term "thin" in independent claims 1, 12 and 19 rendered the claims indefinite.

In response to the Office action, independent claims 1, 12 and 18 have been amended to eliminate the term "thin" from the claims. Accordingly, the claims are now definite and the Applicants request removal of the rejection.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102

The Office action rejected various combinations of claims 1-20 under various provisions of 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by Address (U.S. Patent No. 5,839,961), Witort et al (U.S. Patent No. 3,110,754), Ishikawa (U.S. Patent No. 6,101,407), Holemans et al (U.S. Publication No. 2003/0144062) and Hendrian et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,450,890). In view of the amendment to independent claims 1, 12 and 18, the Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections.

To anticipate the claims under §102, the reference must disclose, teach or suggest each feature of the claims. None of the references presented in the Office action disclose, teach or suggest a support member received in a tube having a central hub and radial elements extending from the hub to an interior surface of the tube, wherein the support member has a length (L1) and the tube has a length (L2) and the ratio of L1/L2 is less than 1.0. Nowhere does Address, Witort et al, Ishikawa, Holemans et al or Hendrian et al disclose, teach or suggest the claimed configuration of the present invention. Accordingly, for at least this reason, the claims are patentable and the Applicants respectfully request removal of the rejections.

Conclusion


The Applicants believe the present case is in condition for allowance. It is respectfully requested that the Examiner pass the case to issue.

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Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: March 14, 2005

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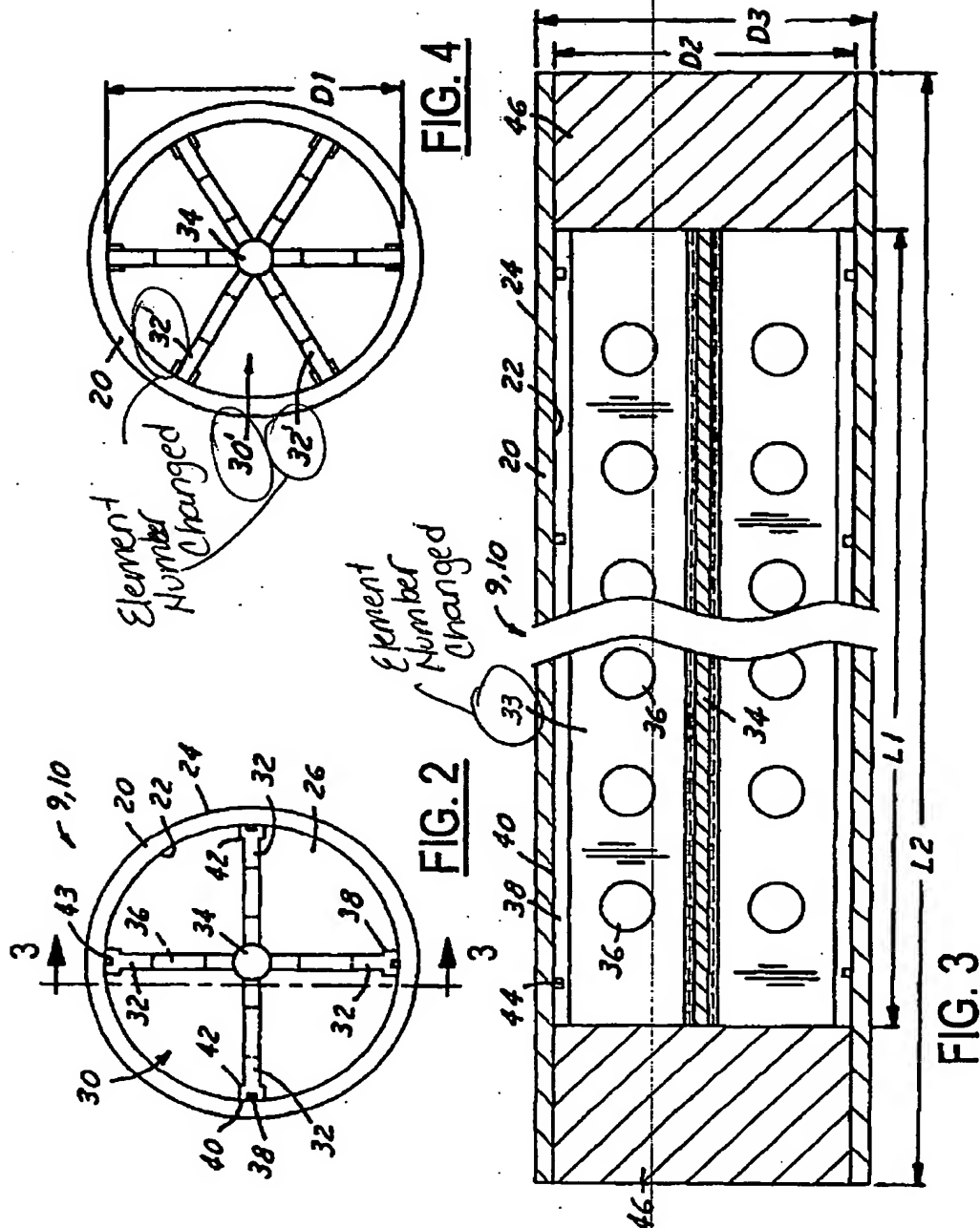
Attachments

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